

Introduction to Flash Fiction

Jess Gallo

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

University of Wisconsin Madison

jrgallo@wisc.edu

Learning Targets:

Participants will experiment with flash fiction to gain a deeper understanding of the essentials of fiction writing and a new genre for creative writing.

Resources:

SmokeLong Quarterly: www.smokelong.com

This is an online literary magazine that publishes flash fiction exclusively. Go ahead and get lost in the stories, but don't give out the website to students—not all of these flashes are school appropriate!

Flash Fiction Factoids:

Flash Fiction is just one name for an increasingly popular genre of creative writing that features very short stories. Sudden fiction, microfiction, and short short stories are some of the other names for stories that contain all the traditional elements of fiction in 300-1000 words.

Flash fiction poses a unique challenge to writers because of its length and tendency to hint at or suggest a much larger story beyond the words on the page.

Ernest Hemingway's six-word flash is one of the most notable: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

Getting Started with Flash Fiction:

- Find a point of conflict and focus your writing on that. Keep your focus narrow and think in terms of minutes and seconds rather than hours or days.
- Start in the middle of the action.
- Make your reader guess what the character will do until the very end.

Example Flash Fiction prompt:

Write a flash fiction story about the thoughts and feelings a character has in the moment he or she discovers a betrayal.